

Capsule Summary  
SM-609  
Ellis Grist Mill  
Bushwood  
Private

c. 1910

Beginning in the 1830s, milling operations in St. Mary's County shifted away from water-power towards the newly invented steam powered mills. Steam power liberated local milling from geographic constraints, decreased the initial infrastructure outlays for dams and races, limited the impacts of droughts, and most importantly enhanced production. The Ellis Grist Mill, constructed c. 1910, typifies the impact of steam power upon milling. While mills used to dot the landscape of St. Mary's County, the Ellis Grist Mill is significant as one of only three documented grist mills left in the count (the others being the Yowaiski Mill (SM-420) and Cecil's Mill (SM-382)). It is also one of two mills remaining that retain their original hardware (the other is Cecil's Mill).

In 1907, Richard Ellis, a prominent local carpenter, erected the present-day Bushwood Post Office (SM-608) to serve as his place of residence as well as a mail depot. Only three years later, Ellis erected a grist mill and saw mill just to the southeast of the building. Situated at the inland crossroads of Bushwood Wharf Road and Maddox Road, the Ellis Grist Mill was ideally located. Inland farmers could have their corn milled, lumber sawn, and mail delivered. While the saw mill no longer exists, the grist mill still stands and includes much of its original hardware. The mill stone, conveyor, and line shafting all survive intact, allowing for a candid view of the milling process. Shelled corn would first be placed in a large vat below the level of the first floor. From there, metal cups screwed onto a conveyor belt would transport the corn up to the second story, where it would fall back down into the first floor mill stone and be ground into flour and/or feed. The mill's operating ability and market were undoubtedly small enough for its owner Richard Ellis to engage in several other pursuits, for he also operated a saw mill, was the postmaster for Bushwood from 1908-1943, and served as a local master carpenter to some of the most prominent members of the local community.

SM-609, Ellis Grist Mill  
St. Mary's County  
Maryland Comprehensive State Historic Preservation Data

Historic Context

Geographic Organization:	Western Shore
Chronological/Developmental Period:	Industrial/Urban Dominance, 1870-1930
Historic Period Theme:	Agriculture Architecture Economic

Resource Type

Category:	Building
Historic Environment:	Rural Crossroads
Historic Function and Use:	Grist Mill
Known Design Source:	Richard Ellis, Builder

**Maryland Historical Trust  
State Historic Sites Inventory Form**

MARYLAND INVENTORY OF  
HISTORIC PROPERTIES

Survey No. SM-609

Magi No.

DOE ☐ yes ☐ no

**1. Name** (indicate preferred name)

historic Ellis Grist Mill

and/or common

**2. Location**

50 yards from the intersection of Maddox Rd. & Bushwood Wharf Rd. on the SE side of Bushwood Wharf Rd.  
street & number not for publication

city, town Bushwood

vicinity of

congressional district 7

state Maryland

county St. Mary's TM-30, G-22, P-294

**3. Classification**

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> not applicable	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input type="checkbox"/> museum
			<input type="checkbox"/> park
			<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
			<input type="checkbox"/> religious
			<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
			<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

**4. Owner of Property** (give names and mailing addresses of all owners)

name Donald G. Eaton and Lucy A. Peterkin

street & number PO Box 25

telephone no.: 301-769-4762

city, town Bushwood

state and zip code Md 20618-0025

**5. Location of Legal Description**

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. St. Mary's County Courthouse

liber MRB 398

street & number

folio 54

city, town Leonardtown

state Maryland

**6. Representation in Existing** Historical Surveys

title

date

☐ federal ☐ state ☐ county ☐ local

depository for survey records

city, town

state

## 7. Description

Survey No. SM-609

### Condition

☐ excellent  
☒ good  
☐ fair

☐ deteriorated  
☐ ruins  
☐ unexposed

### Check one

☐ unaltered  
☒ altered

### Check one

☒ original site

☐ moved

date of move \_\_\_\_\_

Prepare both a summary paragraph and a general description of the resource and its various elements as it exists today.

Contributing resource count: 1

The Ellis Grist Mill is strategically located on the east side of Bushwood Wharf Road just south of the Bushwood Wharf Road and Maryland 238 (Maddox Road) crossroads in Bushwood, Maryland. Oriented on a north/south axis, the grist mill building is bounded to the west by Bushwood Wharf Road (just across the street from the Bushwood Post Office (SM-698)), to the north and east by a cultivated field and woods, and to the south by the Ellis/Butler Tenant House (SM-610) and a series of outbuildings.

The one-and-a-half story, two bay, one room plan mill is underpinned by a series of new brick piers -- recently replacing a deteriorated foundation. The braced, circular sawn, braced frame is entirely sheathed with clapboard fastened with wire and cut nails. The roof is covered with corrugated metal.

The primary or north elevation consists of a door and window. The wide, four panel door is sturdily constructed utilizing diagonal tongue and groove strips of wood. The doorway is sheltered by a shed overhang supported by a pair of plain brackets. The window consists of a two-over-six, double-hung sash. The half story is lit by a six-over-six window. At the east corner of this side, remnants of a well and brick and concrete base for the steam engine can be seen. The west elevation is pierced by two, six-over-six windows. There are no other openings on this side although a missing clapboard reveals the braced framing and new sill. The south elevation is blind. The east elevation's fenestration consists of a strongly built, but slender, four panel door with each of the panels constructed of diagonal, tongue-and-groove slats. While there are not any windows, this elevation does exhibit indications of its original power supply. Horizontally laid metal rods jut out beyond the clapboard exterior. These rods were once attached to a steam engine which turned the line shafting and mill stone located on the inside.

Each floor of the mill features only one room, but each of these spaces retain their original machinery so that the complete process of milling can easily be seen. The first floor, for instance, features a pair of vertical chutes that extend below floor level and into the half story. Below the floor is a bin for the shelled but unmilled kernels. These kernels are picked up by metal cups attached to a fabric ribbon that continuously runs inside the chutes. The kernels are then deposited into another chute which drops them into a vat that lies just above the mill stone apparatus on the first floor. A metal rod extends down into the first floor of the mill and allows the miller to control and restrict the flow of kernels into the mill stone casing. The kernels are then crushed between the two stones and deposited into a wooden bin and bagged. Other related elements of the mill include a series of bins and cabinets, and a workbench on the first floor. The second floor appears to have served as storage as several pieces of the original line-shafting and fabric ribbons survive intact. A partition wall is situated near the southwest corner of the second floor but it is unclear its exact function.

# 8. Significance

Survey No. SM-609

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400–1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500–1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600–1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700–1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800–1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900–	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

**Specific dates** 1910 **Builder/Architect** Richard Ellis

check: Applicable Criteria: ☒ A ☐ B ☒ C ☐ D  
and/or

Applicable Exception: ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E ☐ F ☐ G

Level of Significance: ☐ national ☒ state ☒ local

Prepare both a summary paragraph of significance and a general statement of history and support.

Beginning in the 1830s, milling operations in St. Mary's County shifted away from water-power towards the newly invented steam powered mills. Steam power liberated local milling from geographic constraints, decreased the initial infrastructure outlays for dams and races, limited the impacts of droughts, and most importantly enhanced production. The Ellis Grist Mill, constructed c. 1910, typifies the impact of steam power upon milling. While dozens of mills used to dot the landscape of St. Mary's County, the Ellis Grist Mill is significant as one of only three documented grist mills left in the count (the others being the Yowaiski Mill (SM-420) and Cecil's Mill (SM-382)). It is also one of two mills remaining that retain their original hardware (the other is Cecil's Mill).

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## 9. Major Bibliographical References

Survey No. SM-609

Interviews with Donald Eaton, Lucy Peterkin, and Frances Ellis, November, December, 1997.  
Marks, bayly Ellen. "Economics and Society in a Staple Plantation System: St. mary's County, Maryland, 1790-1840." Dissertation, University of Maryland, 1979.

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property 2 acres around buildingQuadrangle name Rock Point, MdQuadrangle scale 1:24 000UTM References do NOT complete UTM references

A 

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Zone Easting Northing

B 

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Zone Easting Northing

C 

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D 

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E 

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F 

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G 

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H 

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### Verbal boundary description and justification

Same as per deed description.

### List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	code	county	code
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state	code	county	code
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## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Kirk E. Ranzetta, Historic Sites Surveyororganization St. Mary's County Dept. of Planning & Zoningdate February, 1998street & number 22740 Washington Streettelephone 301-475-4662city or town Leonardtownstate Maryland

The Maryland Historic Sites Inventory was officially created by an Act of the Maryland Legislature to be found in the Annotated Code of Maryland, Article 41, Section 181 KA, 1974 supplement.

The survey and inventory are being prepared for information and record purposes only and do not constitute any infringement of individual property rights.

return to:

Maryland Historical Trust  
Shaw House  
21 State Circle  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401  
(301) 269-2438

**MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST**  
DHCP/DHCD  
100 COMMUNITY PLACE  
CROWNSVILLE, MD 21032-2023  
514-7600

SM-609, Ellis Grist Mill  
St. Mary's County  
8.1 Significance

Chain-of-Title

(All deeds are located at the Land Records Office, St. Mary's County Courthouse, Leonardtown, Maryland unless otherwise noted.)

Reference: Liber MRB 283, Folio 188

Grantee: Donald George Eaton and Lucy Agnes Eaton

Grantor: Frances M. Ellis

Date: November 3, 1977

Notes: The deed notes that the grist mill property was once part of the larger tract called "Bushwood" and "Bushwood Lodge" near the corner of Route 238 and Burshwood Wharf Road.

Reference: Liber DBK 173, Folio 263

Grantee: Frances M. Ellis

Grantor: Richard Carroll Ellis

Date: November 30, 1971

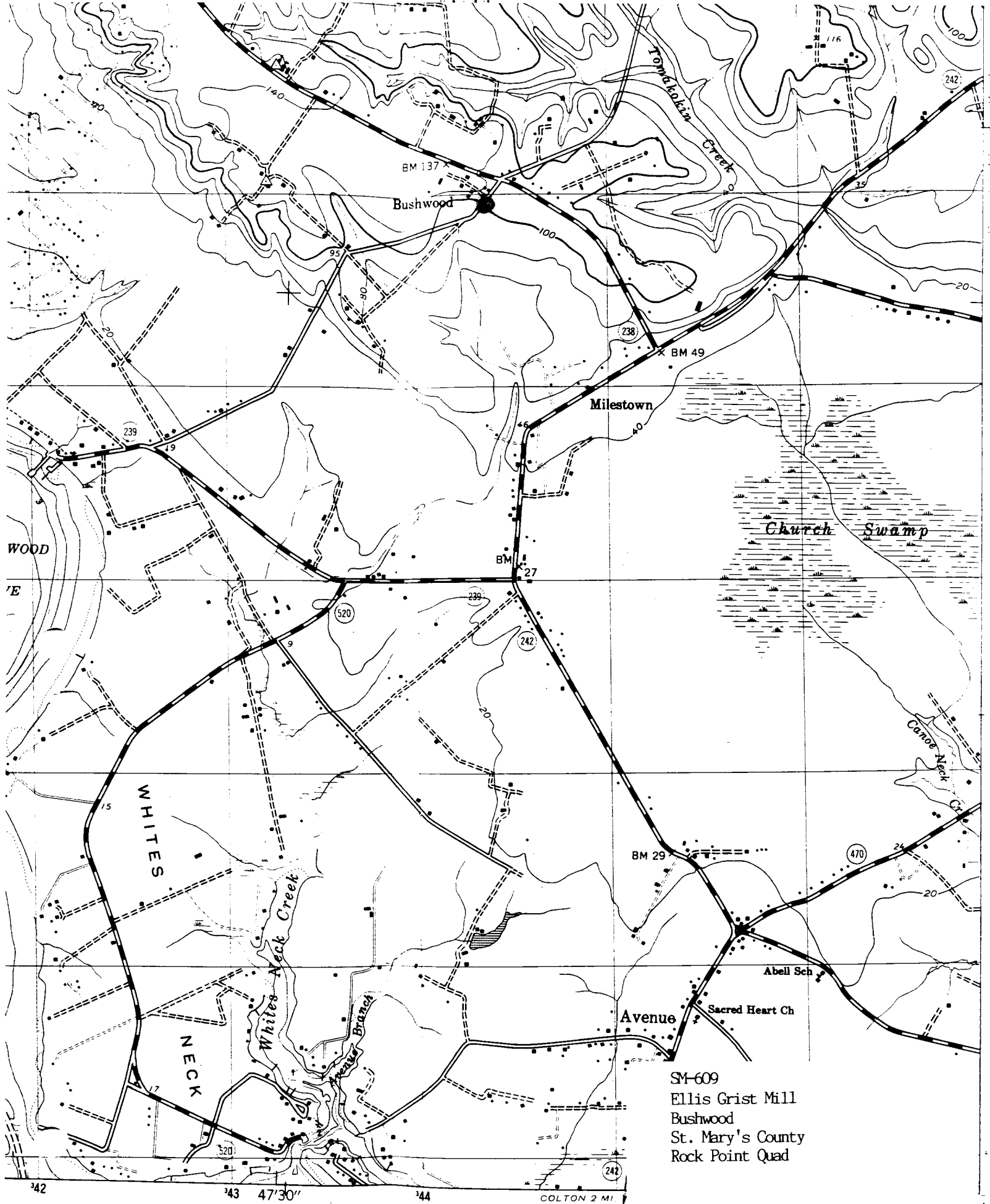
Reference: Liber EBA 11, Folio 68

Grantee: Richard Carroll Ellis

Grantor: John W. and Eleanor M. Renehan

Date: March 28, 1913

Reference: The deed notes that the property contains 11 9/10 acres and includes "the mill and machinery attached to said mill." The deed also requires that the property "never be used to sell ...liquors." The conditions of the transfer also gave the crop of wheat on the property and allowed the grantees to use the woods for cord wood. The deed also notes a survey by Charles Heard drawn on February 13, 1913. A search for the survey in the survey indices proved futile.



SY-609  
 Ellis Grist Mill  
 Bushwood  
 St. Mary's County  
 Rock Point Quad

#### ROAD CLASSIFICATION

Medium-duty

Light-duty





Picture of Ellis Mill (SM-609) + Bushwood Post Office (SM-608)

Man standing at extreme right is Richard Carroll Ellis

SM-609

Ellis Grist Mill

St. Mary's County

Kirk Ranzetta

Dec/97

Mid SAPO

- View of Ellis Grist Mill + Bushwood Post Office c. early twentieth century - looking N

1 of 1



EN-609

Ellis Grist Mill

St. Mary's County

Kirk Rancette

Dec/97

MD SHPO

N + E elevations

1 of 5



SM- 607

Ellis Grist Mill

St. Mary's County

Kirk Ranzetta

Dec/97

Md. SHPO

S+W elevations

2 of 5



SM - 011

Ellis Grist Mill

St. Mary's County

Kirk Ranetta

Dec/97

Ind 2HP0

Int. - conveyor - looking S

3 of 3





ΣM-609

Ellis Grist Mill

St. Mary's County

Kirk Ranzetta

Dec/97

14d SHPO

Interior - millstone & chute - looking S

4 of 5



SM-609

Ellis Grisi Hill

St. Mary's County

Kirk Ranzetta

Dec/97

Md SHPO

Int - callers looking N

5 of 5